

# 35TH AVE NE PAVING PROJECT



## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

December 2017

We're repaving and restriping 2.3 miles of 35th Ave NE between NE 89th St and NE 47th St, including NE 45th Pl. Construction is planned to begin in spring 2018.

We know how important it is to maintain our streets and our Paving Program helps take care of the basics by rehabilitating arterial streets each year. Paving also provides an opportunity to update the street design to enhance safety and build features called for in citywide transportation plans. There are many competing needs for our limited street space and the design for 35th Ave NE helps organize the space more effectively to serve the needs of multiple users and make the street safe for all.

For more information on the project, read some frequently asked questions below that have been asked in public comments and at public events. If you would like to skip to a section, please use the links below.

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## PROJECT OVERVIEW

### 1. What are the elements of the project?

- **Repave the street:** This will extend the life of the pavement, making it safer and smoother for travel. Keeping our transportation system in a state of good repair helps lower the cost of future maintenance. We prioritize paving based on street [pavement condition](#), traffic volume, geographic equity, cost, and opportunities for grants or coordination with other projects in the area.
- **Better organize the street:** We're clearly designating space on the street for people driving and people biking. This will help make the street more intuitive and predictable, which increases safety for everyone, including for people crossing the street.
- **Add bike lanes and protected bike lanes where space allows:** We're committed to providing safe and reliable transportation options for everyone, no matter how you travel. The City's [Bike Master Plan](#), which was developed with considerable public input and adopted by the Seattle City Council, recommends a protected bike lane on 35th. Bike

lanes enhance the street for everyone, not just people who choose to ride bikes, by designating a safe space to bike, making the street more predictable for everyone.

- **Improve the intersection at NE 75th St:** We're adding left-turn pockets for northbound and southbound traffic on 35th Ave NE at NE 75th St.
- **Minimize parking impacts:** While parking will be consolidated to the east side of the street, peak-hour restrictions (between 4 and 6 PM) will be removed to make parking available all day.
- **Improve speed and reliability for people riding transit:** We're working with King County Metro to consolidate stops to improve speed and reliability, particularly for Route 65. We'll remove bus stops based on the number of people boarding/exiting the bus and to maintain consistent spacing between stops.
- **Upgrade sidewalks:** In select locations, we're upgrading curb ramps to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards and repairing cracked or buckled sidewalks. We're also adding a porous pavement treatment in street tree pits, which is durable and flush with the sidewalk to reduce trip hazard.

## 2. How can street designs enhance safety?

As part of the collaborative [Vision Zero](#) effort, the City of Seattle aims to eliminate serious and fatal crashes by 2030. Updating street designs helps achieve this goal in several ways:

- **Organizes the street to be more predictable for everyone:** Protected bike lanes contribute to all users having a designated space.
- **Provides a safe place for people biking:** Adding bike lanes helps make biking a better option for people of all ages and abilities in northeast Seattle, contributes to establishing a citywide bike network and provides direct connections to businesses and other destinations on 35th Ave NE.
- **Improves safety for people crossing the street by narrowing the crossing distance:** Today's lanes are very wide, with a total curb-to-curb distance that spans 2 parking lanes and 2 travel lanes. During peak commute hours when parking is restricted, the curbside space is often used for passing or turning and pedestrians must watch for active traffic in all of this space. This circumstance poses a "double threat," when drivers on the inside lanes are not able to see pedestrians as they cross the street and may not stop. The new street design will keep parking in place all day, while also clarifying that pedestrians will have to cross one lane in each direction.

## 3. How has safety improved on other corridors after rechannelization?

Better street design can lead to safer streets by creating designated and more predictable space for all users. Every street has unique characteristics and can't be exactly compared to others. However, here are some examples of other corridors in Seattle where design has led to improved safety outcomes.

- **NE 75th St:** In 2013, [NE 75th St was redesigned to calm speeds and reduce crashes](#). Rechannelizing the street to provide 1 lane in each direction with a center left turn lane created space that could be used for bike lanes, providing people with more travel options. After we implemented that project, we found:

- Speeding decreased by 64% in the eastbound direction
- Speeding decreased by 56% in the westbound direction
- Total collisions decreased by 45%
- Travel time has remained the same
- **2nd Ave:** In 2014, we installed a two-way protected bike lane (PBL) on the east side of 2nd Ave between Pike Place Market (Pike St) and Pioneer Square (Yesler Way) through the [2nd Avenue PBL Demonstration Project](#). This year, we're making traffic signal improvements and extending the existing 2-way protected bike lane along 2nd Ave from Pike St to Denny Way. Providing a dedicated PBL in both directions created a designated space for people biking and improved safety for all travelers, whether walking, biking, or driving. Left-turn pockets, parking, and load zones were accommodated based on traffic volumes and business needs. Significant before and after results are noted below:
  - There was a 296% increase in people biking on 2nd Ave, from 188 to 744 people biking each day on average
  - There was a 77% reduction in collision rates and a 75% reduction in serious collision rates between bicycles and vehicles
  - Vehicle collision rates have decreased by 6% and serious collision rates have decreased by 31% even with an increase of vehicles on 2nd Ave
  - The difference in travel time on a Metro bus along the corridor is typically less than one minute

#### **4. Why are you not paving 35th Ave NE between NE 65th and NE 55th streets?**

A small section between NE 65th and NE 55th streets is made up of concrete panels that were replaced a few years ago and is in good condition. This section is included in the project for street design changes but will not be repaved in 2018.

#### **5. Are there changes to the street design on NE 45th Pl?**

No. We will repave NE 45th Pl and restripe it to maintain the current layout. We will also install a new safety barrier on the Burke-Gilman Trail bridge pier in the center of the street.

#### **6. Was a SEPA environmental analysis performed as part of this project?**

This project is exempt from performing a SEPA checklist. Under [Seattle Municipal Code 25.05.800 \(B\)](#), street improvements including pavement marking, reconstruction of the roadbed within existing curb lines, and the addition of bicycle lanes are exempt. Bike lanes on 35th are included as part of the Seattle Bike Master Plan, which completed a [SEPA checklist](#) and received a Determination of Non-significance.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

### 7. What outreach has been completed to date?

Our outreach began in summer 2016 focusing on several paving projects in northeast Seattle, including 35th Ave NE. Outreach activities included open houses, an online survey, door-to-door outreach, presentations to community groups, and a mailer to 24,000 households in northeast Seattle. We announced the street concept design in May 2017 on our webpage and via an email update to our listserv.

### 8. What have you heard during outreach?

Over the past year, we have heard from many people in the community through our outreach efforts as well as from emails and calls to the project team. Key themes include:

- Concern about speeding
- Desire to cross street more easily
- Desire to drive less and use other modes more (walk, transit, and bike)
- Disapproval of bike lanes (concern about safety, under-utilization, and impacts on parking/congestion)
- Preference for protected bike lanes
- Preference for a street design that supports lower vehicle speeds
- Interest in maintaining parking
- Concern about slow transit speeds
- Concern about congestion
- Concern about cut-through traffic on adjacent streets
- Desire for intersection improvements, particularly at NE 75th and NE 65th streets
- Maintaining access to key destinations (e.g. the library, religious institutions, post office)

### 9. How are you incorporating public feedback in the design?

We recognize that 35th Ave NE is an integral part of many northeast Seattle communities while also being part of a citywide network. We heard that many neighbors in northeast Seattle rely on their personal vehicle for travel and that there's desire to walk, take transit, and bike more. When developing the design, we also looked at the city's transportation plans, including the [Bike Master Plan](#), which was prepared with considerable public input.

We're committed to working with neighbors to address additional concerns about the design with the goal of ensuring safe transportation options for everyone. These include:

- Including left-turn pockets at NE 75th St, which was a request we heard from the community
- Working with individual businesses and institutions to ensure loading and access needs continue to be met
- Understanding current concerns about speeding on residential streets and working with SDOT's Neighborhood Traffic Program to perform speed studies as needed

### 10. What's the status of this project and what's coming up next?

We're approaching final design at the end of 2017. We've received a lot of feedback this fall, through email, briefings, and at the October 21 public meeting.

As we finalize the design, we'll work closely with adjacent property owners, businesses, and residents to understand things like business operations and access needs to inform the final details of the design. We'll continue to keep project neighbors informed through [email updates](#) as we prepare for construction to begin in spring 2018.

## VEHICLE TRAFFIC AND CONGESTION

### **11. Will there be turn lanes at NE 75th St?**

Yes, we will be adding left turn lanes at NE 75th St, which was a request we heard from many neighbors. Heading southbound, the turn pocket will be 100 feet long and heading northbound, it will be 80 feet long. This length will accommodate about 4-6 cars. We're not adding left-turn arrows to the signal at this time, as this requires installing new signal poles, additional underground utility work, and coordination with nearby private property owners. We'll continue to evaluate traffic operations and consider adding them in the future.

### **12. Will there be turn lanes at other key intersections?**

We're currently reviewing options for left-turn pockets at NE 65th St but we must maintain adequate space for buses that make turns at this intersection. The existing left-turn pockets at NE 85th St will be maintained.

### **13. Will there be a center turn lane on 35th Ave NE?**

We won't include a center turn lane through the corridor due to limited street width on 35th Ave NE and our commitment to provide transportation options by including bike lanes. We reviewed traffic operations and the number of turning vehicles at intersections along the corridor. Arterial intersections are the key places that matter when it comes to keeping traffic moving, which is why we're adding turn pockets as noted above. In addition, our traffic modeling indicates minimal increase in travel times: travel times between NE 65th and NE 85th streets are projected to be half a minute to 1.5 minutes longer during peak hours.

### **14. Will the street design change congestion in this corridor?**

We've heard concerns about increased congestion with the new street design. When looking at peak-hour travel times, a driver's commute could increase by half a minute to 1.5 minutes along a 1-mile stretch between NE 65th and NE 85th streets. Travel time increases would be much less during non-peak hours.

### **15. How will cars be able to move around recycling/garbage trucks, buses, and other slow-moving vehicles that may block traffic?**

We know it can be inconvenient to wait behind slower-moving vehicles that make frequent stops. However, garbage trucks do not travel on 35th Ave NE every day, which limits the time that they will slow down traffic on 35th Ave NE. If there is a break in oncoming traffic, waiting vehicles may cautiously pass a garbage truck.

Many northbound bus stops will have space for the bus to pull to the curb, allowing waiting traffic to pass. Because of limited space in the southbound direction, vehicles will need to wait behind buses. We are removing 4 bus stops on each side of the street to increase speed and reliability for transit, which also limits the number of times you may get stopped behind a bus.

**16. How will cars be able to pull over for emergency vehicles?**

On any street in Seattle, vehicles must pull over for emergency vehicles to pass. This will still be possible on 35th Ave NE, as people driving may pull over into existing driveways, parking areas, or onto a side street. This is the case on 35th Ave NE today between 9 AM and 3 PM, when there is one travel lane in each direction and parking on both sides of the street. In addition, the Seattle Fire Department reviews all plans for changes to street design to ensure that emergency vehicles are accommodated.

**17. What is the current speeding rate on 35th Ave NE and what do you expect it to be following completion of this project?**

Right now, 85 percent of vehicles are traveling at 31 miles per hour or below. We've seen that restriping lanes and better organizing the street helps organically and naturally slow vehicle speeds. After the project is complete, we'll study speeds on 35th Ave NE and make additional changes, if needed, based on observations and data.

Speed is the critical factor in the severity of collisions. People who are walking are twice as likely to survive after being hit by a car at 25 MPH than at 30 MPH. Reducing traffic speeds through this project is part of our [Vision Zero](#) efforts to eliminate serious and fatal crashes by 2030.

**18. How can this project minimize traffic cutting through adjacent residential streets?**

Many of the adjacent residential streets have sidewalks, curbs, and on-street parking, which are some of the most effective tools for slowing down vehicle speeds. In response to the concerns we've heard from neighbors, we will conduct a before and after study to measure vehicle volumes and speeds on side streets in select locations. If you have concerns about a specific street, please get in touch with the project team so that we can perform a study and determine if [traffic calming measures](#) are needed.

Residents can also better understand the existing conditions on their neighborhood streets by borrowing a radar gun from SDOT to measure current speeds. Speeding is generally considered a problem if 15% or more of the traffic is going 5 miles over the speed limit. To learn more, refer to our Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program [webpage](#).

**19. How wide will the travel lanes be in the new configuration?**

Travel lane widths will vary between 10 and 11 feet in the new design. This width will accommodate buses and other large vehicles.

## BIKE LANES

### 20. Why is a bike lane included in the design?

The [Bike Master Plan](#) recommends a protected bike lane for much of 35th Ave NE, which will help meet our commitment to build a citywide bike network connecting people to work, shopping, and schools. Protected bike lanes help make the street more predictable for everyone and can make biking a better option for people of all ages and abilities. When asked about bike lanes, community feedback indicated a preference for protected lanes to be installed.

### 21. Why was 35th Ave NE designated for bike lanes in the Bike Master Plan?

We're building a citywide network of routes for all ages and abilities that helps make biking a real transportation option. Arterial streets like 35th Ave NE provide direct connections to local neighborhood destinations including shopping and community centers, as well as connections between neighborhoods. Bike lanes on 35th Ave NE also provide routes to light rail stations and other major destinations by connecting to our citywide network:

- **University of Washington light rail station:** Connecting to the Burke-Gilman Trail via the future NE 68th St or 39th Ave NE Neighborhood Greenway
- **Roosevelt business district and future light rail station:** Connecting to the future NE 68th St Neighborhood Greenway and NE 65th St bike lanes
- **Green Lake area:** Connecting to the future NE 68th St Neighborhood Greenway, NE 65th St bike lanes, and Ravenna protected bike lanes

As part of the connected network of bike facilities, there is a bicycle route available nearby on the 39th Ave NE Neighborhood Greenway. These routes provide options for people that choose to bicycle, depending on their preference. There are similar examples around the city of parallel routes, including the Roosevelt Way NE protected bike lanes near the 12th Ave NE Neighborhood Greenway.

For more information on how bike paths will connect in northeast Seattle, see the [Northeast Seattle bike master plan map](#).

### 22. Can you share data for bike usage on other corridors?

Seattle has a goal of increasing bicycle ridership through a safe and connected bicycle network. We track daily [bike ridership at several key locations](#) throughout the city, including riders using the neighborhood greenway on [39th Ave NE at NE 62nd St](#). Citywide, we have seen a 10-11% increase in bicycle ridership each year between 2014 and 2016. On some corridors, we're seeing larger increases, such as the 2nd Ave protected bike lane.

- **2nd Ave Protected Bike Lane Demonstration Project:** In 2014, we installed a two-way PBL on the east side of 2nd Ave between Pike Place Market (Pike St) and Pioneer Square (Yesler Way). Providing a dedicated PBL in both directions provided a designated space for people biking and improved safety for all travelers, whether walking, biking, or driving. 188 bicyclists used 2nd Ave prior to the addition of the PBL, according to daily average counts; after implementation there was a 296% increase and 744 bicyclists now use 2nd Ave daily.



- **Westlake Cycle Track:** We counted bicycle riders in June 2017 on the Westlake Cycle Track; a two-way protected bike lane on Westlake Ave. The counts ranged from 1,036 riders on a Saturday to as many as 3,217 riders on a Tuesday in June. Over the past year, there have been zero reported bicycle and pedestrian collisions along the Westlake Cycle Track.
- **N 34th St Protected Bike Lane in Fremont:** We collected traffic volumes for bicycles, motor vehicles, and trucks during peak travel hours one year after project implementation. At this time, traffic volumes on N 34th St within the project area remained near historical levels. Bicycle volumes were much higher than motor vehicle and truck volumes during peak periods, and accounted for approximately two-thirds of all traffic.

As anticipated, most people riding bicycles were doing so in the protected bike lane (over 95%), rather than in travel lanes. Trucks made up a very small amount of peak period traffic, and were likely using the street during non-peak periods (9 AM to 4 PM). On an average annual basis, the number of people biking increased by 127.3% after implementation of the two-way protected bike lane.

## 23. Why isn't there a protected bike lane on the entire corridor?

We're balancing the many needs for our limited street space. 35th Ave NE isn't wide enough to incorporate a protected bike lane through the entire corridor. There are protected bike lanes on both sides of the street north of NE 85th St where the street is widest. As the street becomes narrower, we've incorporated a northbound protected bike lane where feasible, north of NE 65th St. There will be a striped bike lane and then sharrows south of NE 65th St in the southbound direction.

## 24. How will the bike lane be designed to accommodate turning vehicles?

Striping will be painted across business and multifamily residential driveways to alert people biking and driving of a "mixing zone." This type of pavement marking is also used in other parts of Seattle, including on Roosevelt Way NE, Broadway, 2nd Ave, and Westlake protected bike lanes. If you're crossing a protected bike lane, you should follow the [rules of the road](#), whether you are walking, biking or driving.

## 25. Do bike lanes impact small business revenue?

Multiple cities have done studies and found that bike lanes do not have a negative impact on business revenue. A few studies are linked below for more information:

- [League of American Bicyclists study](#) (June 2009; expanded July 2012)
  - **Key findings:** Along San Francisco's Valencia Street, two-thirds of merchants said that new bike lanes had a positive overall impact on their business. Two-thirds of the merchants also supported more traffic calming measures on the street. A study of greater Portland also found that bicycling customers spend more per month. "Customers who arrive by automobile spend the most per visit across all of the establishments, but cyclists spend the most per month," writes Kelly Clifton, associate professor at Portland State University.
- [Urban Land Institute study](#) (March 2016)



- **Key findings:** A general street upgrade on Broadway Avenue in **Salt Lake City, Utah** removed 30 percent of on-street parking from nine blocks of the major commercial street, but improved crosswalks and sidewalks and added protected bike lanes. After the changes, 59 percent of business owners said they supported the street improvements, while only 18 percent opposed them.
- [PeopleForBikes and Alliance for Biking & Walking](#) (March 2017)
  - **Key findings:** This report compiles the latest hard data and showcases interviews with 15 businesspeople in five U.S. cities where protected bike lane networks are expanding quickly: Austin, Texas; San Francisco, California; Portland, Oregon; Chicago, Illinois; and Washington, DC. A few key findings include:
    - By extending the geographic range of travel, bike lanes help neighborhoods redevelop without waiting years for new transit service to debut.
    - Savvy workers, especially Millennials and members of Generation X, increasingly prefer downtown jobs and nearby homes. Because protected bike lanes make biking more comfortable and popular, they help companies locate downtown without breaking the bank on auto parking space.
    - From DC to Chicago to Portland, the story is the same: people go out of their way to use protected bike lanes.
    - In growing urban communities, protected bike lane networks encourage more people to ride bikes for everyday trips. And when people use bikes for errands, they're the ideal kind of retail customers: regulars. They stop by often and spend as much or more per month as people who arrive in cars.

## BUS AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

### 26. Are there changes to bus stops?

Thanks to Seattle voters and the Seattle Transportation Benefit District, Seattle is adding more transit service in northeast Seattle. In September 2017, Seattle improved Route 65 to 10-minute service on weekdays from 6 AM to 7 PM and added Night Owl trips after 2 AM, to ensure riders can travel where they want, when they want.

Working with King County Metro, we're improving transit speed and reliability to Routes 64 and 65. As part of this project and to help traffic and buses move more smoothly, we're consolidating bus stops in the project area. We'll remove 4 bus stops on each side of the street along 35th Ave NE based on the number of people boarding/exiting the bus. We will maintain consistent spacing so that the bus will stop every 2 blocks.

In addition, northbound bus stops at NE 85th and 75th streets will move from the south side of the intersection to the north side to help traffic move more smoothly. New bus shelters or awnings will also be added at several locations.

**27. Are you removing the bus stop at NE 68th St?**

Yes. We have heard concerns from project neighbors about removing this stop because it is used by library patrons and people attending services at nearby places of worship. Bus stops will still be available at 70th and 65th, within one block of these destinations.

**28. Will the new bus stop on the north side of NE 75th St make it harder for kids to walk to Eckstein Middle School?**

As part of [Safe Routes to School](#), we're working with Eckstein Middle School on a recommended path for students exiting the bus on the east side of 35th Ave NE. Students would cross 35th Ave NE, remaining on the north side of NE 75th St, and continue up the hill to the existing pedestrian signal at 31st Ave NE, which is directly across from the school's front door.

**29. Will there be sidewalk and/or crosswalk improvements as part of this project?**

This project includes pedestrian improvements including:

- A new pushbutton-activated rapid flashing beacon will be added to the crosswalk at NE 80th St as part of the [Your Voice, Your Choice program](#)
- Tree pit improvements in some locations using permeable paving that is durable and flush with the sidewalk to reduce trip hazards
- Upgrades to curb ramps at many intersections along the corridor to help meet Americans with Disability Act (ADA) standards

## **PARKING AND LOADING**

**30. How will on-street parking change?**

During project planning, we studied parking utilization throughout the day. We found 25% or less of the available parking is used along more than half the corridor. The heaviest usage is near the commercial nodes at NE 68th and 75th streets, and north of NE 85th St. On some blocks, parking is 70 to 100% utilized, however, adjacent blocks (one block to the north or south on 35th Ave NE), have parking available, with parking utilization at 50% or less.

This data helped support our decision to consolidate on-street parking to the east side of 35th Ave NE. We're also removing peak-hour parking restrictions (between 4 and 6 PM) on the east side of the street to make parking available all day.

**31. Why did SDOT choose to locate all parking on the east side of the street instead of the west side? Do you have data that supports this consolidation?**

Parking is being consolidated to the east side of the street for two primary reasons:

- It improves safety for people biking in the south portion of 35th where the street is narrow and there is only enough space for a dedicated bike lane on one side. Placing the bike lane in the uphill direction means people biking at a slow speed don't delay traffic.

- There are several active destinations on the east side of the street, like the post office, grocery stores, restaurants, cafes, and other services.

### **32. How will loading occur next to the bike lane?**

We are currently working with businesses to discuss access and loading needs and will do our best to maintain convenient load zones as part of this project. In addition to business load zones, we have adjusted disabled parking areas reserved for loading and unloading to be relocated closer to existing curb ramps at intersections to provide access around the protected bike lane to the sidewalk.

### **33. How will you maintain visibility for vehicles pulling out of driveways?**

Our design standards restrict parking within 5 feet upstream and 10 feet downstream of all driveways to maintain visibility. On-street parking areas north of NE 65th St will be clearly marked with striping to better designate where parking is allowed. There will be no parking on the west side of the street.

If you have concerns about visibility around parked cars or are seeing cars parking illegally (too close to driveways or too close to intersections), you should report the occurrence to the Seattle Police Department non-emergency number at 206-625-5011.

## **CONSTRUCTION**

### **34. When will you start construction and how long will it last?**

We anticipate construction will start in spring 2018 and continue through late 2018.

### **35. What can I expect during construction?**

We'll evaluate construction sequencing as we get a contractor on board in early 2018. We'll work with businesses before construction begins to understand specific loading and access needs as we plan for construction. We'll also share regular construction updates with neighbors via email and our outreach team will be available to help address any access issues that may arise. We anticipate that there may be some night paving and detours onto 40th Ave NE. To receive regular email updates during construction, please subscribe to our [email distribution list](#).

### **36. What support does the City of Seattle offer to businesses during construction?**

The City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development has contracted with 2 small business consultants who can assist small businesses with a broad range of services including business planning, organizational management, financial management, and marketing. Please contact the project team or the City's Office of Economic Development directly ([loed@seattle.gov](mailto:loed@seattle.gov)) if you own a business on 35th Ave NE and are interested in learning more about these services.

## **NEARBY PROJECTS**

**37. How is this project coordinated with paving work planned for 25th Ave NE?**

We're also planning to repave 25th Ave NE south of 65th Ave NE starting in early 2018. We understand these are 2 key routes in northeast Seattle; project teams have already begun discussing options to sequence these projects in a way that minimizes impacts on the community and the traveling public.

**38. What are the neighborhood greenway, Vision Zero and Your Voice, Your Choice projects planned nearby?**

Portions of NE 68th St are designated as a future neighborhood greenway and included in the [Neighborhood Greenways 2017-2021 work plan](#). As part of the Vision Zero effort, SDOT has launched a collaborative process to review [street conditions along NE 65th](#) St to improve safety for all travelers. As part of the [Your Voice, Your Choice](#) program, northeast Seattle residents voted for improvements to the pedestrian crossing at NE 80th St. This will include a pushbutton-activated rapid flashing beacon at the crosswalk as well as improved street lighting.